This project used both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine year 1 and year 4 students’ epistemological beliefs and conceptions of teaching. Results show that most of the student-teachers strongly believed that learning effort was more important than innate ability in acquiring knowledge and that knowledge changes. They also inclined to question teacher as the authority of knowledge. As regards conceptions of teaching, their espousal of the constructivist approach to teaching was significantly stronger than their espousal of the traditional approach. Path analysis indicated that epistemological beliefs have significant predictive influence on conceptions of teaching. In general, the student-teachers who held sophisticated epistemological beliefs were more likely to adopt the constructivist conceptions of teaching and those with more naïve epistemological belief preferred the traditional conceptions. In-depth analysis of interview data of final year students revealed some student teachers who possessed both naïve and sophisticated epistemological beliefs adopted a constructivist view of teaching; in contrast, some student-teachers who espoused sophisticated epistemological beliefs were found to hold both constructivist and traditional views regarding their conceptions of teaching. The inconsistencies in the results will be explained, and implications for teacher education programs and future studies will be discussed.

Dr. May Cheng is currently Associate Professor, and Acting Dean of the Faculty of Languages, Arts and Sciences. She teaches under- and post-graduate classes in biology, science education, general studies, liberal studies and health education. She is Programme Leader of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) programme.

Dr. Cheng’s main research areas are teacher education and development, science education and assessment for science learning. She has published papers on teacher education and science education in refereed and international journals, including the Journal of Biological Education, the Canadian Journal of Science, Mathematics, and Technology Education, the International Journal of Learning, the Journal of Science and Mathematics Education in Southeast Asia, Teaching and Teacher Education, the Asia Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, Teacher Development, the Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, the Asia Pacific Education Review, the Asia Paciﬁc Journal of Education, and Education and Training.

Dr. Angel K. Y. Wong is an Assistant Professor in the Educational Psychology, Counselling, and Learning Needs Department at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. She teaches human development, psychology of learning and teaching, and Chinese psychology. Her research interests include achievement motivation, self construal, value, epistemological beliefs and cross-cultural psychology.